

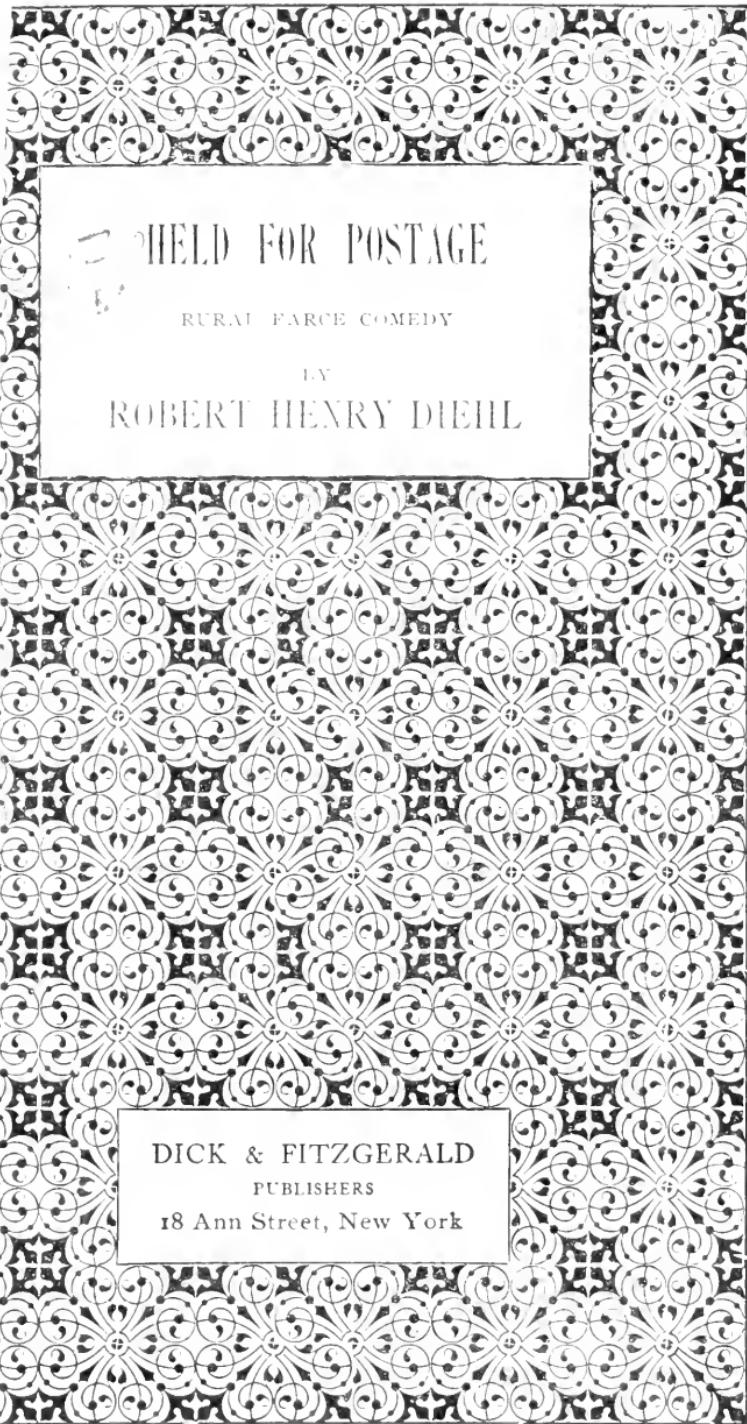
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GREAT LIBEL CASE.	Mock Trial; 1 Scene; 2 hours.....	21
RIDING THE GOAT.	Burlesque Initiation; 1 Scene; 1½ hours	24

DICK & FITZGERALD, Publishers, 18 Ann Street, N. Y.

# HELD FOR POSTAGE

*Farce Comedy in Two Acts*

By ROBERT HENRY DIEHL

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NEW YORK  
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18 ANN STREET

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## CHARACTERS

CLIVER OWEN	<i>Known as "Uncle Oliver"</i>
HERBERT WEST	<i>The young attorney</i>
NATE HASKINS	<i>The selectman</i>
BILL WINTERGREEN	<i>The constable</i>
MAY HOLCOMB	<i>The schoolma'am</i>
JERUSHA WILLIS	<i>The gossip</i>
NAOMI OWEN	<i>Oliver's wife</i>

TIME.—The present.

LOCALITY.—A country village.

TIME OF PLAYING.—One and one-quarter hours.

## SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—OLIVER OWEN's sitting room on a June afternoon. News and callers. "What in creation do *you* want an automobile f'r?" The village gossip. "Hev you heard th' latest?" The selectman and the constable discuss the speed law. MAY HOLCOMB, the orphan. Examination papers and a letter. HERBERT's discovery. "My God, she has accepted *him!* I thought she cared for *me!*" The misunderstanding. "Good-bye!" UNCLE OLIVER between love and duty. "She hes asked me t' post this letter—an' *I will!*"

ACT II.—Same as ACT I. Next evening. Callers. UNCLE

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An

OLIVER and HERBERT. "Y're a dum fool!" Explanations and a tangle. "What did you do with that letter?" "W'y, I posted it!" MAY and the letter. "Held for postage." UNCLE OLIVER's confession. Explanations and a betrothal. The gossip calls, the constable follows, and NATE "drops in!"

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## COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

OLIVER OWEN.—Age about 60. Moderate in speech and action. Gray wig; smooth face; neat black trousers and vest (no coat), soft shirt with turn-down collar, old-fashioned black bow-tie; boots in ACT I, slippers in ACT II. Wears spectacles when reading.

HERBERT WEST.—A manly fellow, about 25 years of age. Light complexion, light moustache; neat business suit, straw hat.

NATE HASKINS.—Age about 45. Shabby genteel; iron-gray wig and side-whiskers. In ACT I he wears a tight-fitting, faded, pepper and salt suit, old-fashioned collar and bow-tie, high white hat, shoes; in ACT II, long duster, automobile cap, goggles and gauntlets. Upon second entrance in ACT II he is without cap, duster is torn up the back, goggles are awry, and right eye is blackened.

BILL WINTERGREEN.—Age about 50. Flaxen wig and goatee; long, blue coat with brass buttons and police badge, blue trousers tucked in boots, gingham shirt (no vest), red bandanna around neck, large, straw hat.

MAY HOLCOMB.—A pretty young woman of 20. A neat white dress. Upon entrance in ACT II, she has a light knitted shawl over shoulders.

JERUSHA WILLIS.—Age about 45. Eccentric in dress, speech and action. Wrapper with large figures, white apron, light old-fashioned shawl, bonnet with bright colored artificial flowers.

NAOMI OWEN.—Age about 60. A sweet, motherly character; neat wrapper, white apron.

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### INCIDENTAL PROPERTIES

ACT I.—Newspaper, spectacles, pipe, tobacco pouch and matches for OLIVER; recipe for JERUSHA; books, pen, ink, writing paper, examination papers, sealed envelope (containing letter), open letter, one-cent stamp, handkerchief, for MAY; book for HERBERT.

ACT II.—Pipe for OLIVER; horse-pistol and handcuffs for BILL; sealed envelope (containing letter) with one-cent stamp for MAY; automobile horn and effects, crash and explosion; red fire for finale.

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### STAGE DIRECTIONS

As seen by the actor on the stage, facing the audience, R. means right of stage; L., left of stage; C., center of stage; R. c., right of center; L. c., left of center; C. d., door in rear flat; R. d., door at right; L. d., door at left. UP, toward rear of stage; DOWN, toward the footlights.

# HELD FOR POSTAGE

## ACT I

**SCENE.**—*Plain interior. Door in rear flat, c. Doors r. and l. Old-fashioned bureau with spread, in l. u. corner, old-fashioned striking clock l. Clock hands indicate 4.30. Vase of flowers, pen, ink bottle, writing paper, pipe and tobacco-pouch on bureau. Window with sash-curtains, in rear flat r. c. Small covered stand with a few house plants, at window. Table with spread, l. c.; bible, books and shade lamp on table. Plain chairs r. and l. of table, plain chair up r., rocking chair down r. c. Motto “God Bless Our Home,” over door in flat. Old-fashioned rugs before all doors and in front of bureau. Lights all on. OLIVER OWEN DISCOVERED seated in rocking chair, reading newspaper. Lively music.*

OLIVER (*looks up*). Wal', of all th' news out, this is th' limit! (*Reads*) "Nathan Haskins, chairman of our esteemed Board of Selectmen, has purchased an automobile of a Mr. White of Westfield." (*Laughs*) I swanny! Thet is rich. (*Knock heard at c. d.*) Come in!

ENTER NATE HASKINS, c. d.

NATE (*hat in hand*). A'fernoon, Oliver.

OLIVER (*rises*). W'y hello, Nate, hev a cheer.

NATE. No, thank y'. Can't stop long. I was a-goin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in.

OLIVER. Glad y' did. I reckon though, y' ain't in sech a hurry but what y' c'n set down a minit 'r two.

NATE (*COMES DOWN*). Wal', p'raps I c'n.

OLIVER. Take this rocker.

NATE. No, thank y'; this cheer'll do. (*Sits r. of table*) I see y've got th' paper. Any news?

OLIVER (*sits*). News! I sh'd say so. What's this I hear 'bout y'r buyin' an automobeel?

NATE (*proudly*). Th' truth, I reckon!

OLIVER (*smiles*). What in creation do *you* want an automobeel f'r?

NATE. Wal', it's 'bout es cheap es a hoss an' kerrige in th' long run; then, too, es chairman of th' selectmen, it behooves me t' be up t' date. (*Confidentially*) 'Tween you an' me an' th' fence post, I hed a chance t' get th' thing second-hand, so I embraced th' opportunity. It's a dandy—almost new. I've got my license t' run it, th' machine come this mornin', an' I expect t' try it out t'morrer. Say, won't I make th' natives set up an' take notice?

OLIVER. Reckon y' will, Nate—th' constable t' boot.

NATE (*with contempt*). Oh, dum him!

OLIVER. Wal', I hope y' don't break y'r neck 'r kill anybody.

NATE. Don't y' worry, Oliver. This machine is g'aranteed t' stand without hitchin', ain't afeared of th' cars, an' a child c'n drive it—'though, of course, I ain't a child.

OLIVER (*aside*). Reckon he must be gettin' 'long toward his second childhood. (*Aloud*) How 'bout its balkin' 'r kickin'? Is it g'aranteed ag'in' thet?

NATE. Oh, get out! Y' jest wait 'til y' see thet machine work. (*Leans toward OLIVER, confidentially*) Of course, this won't go no further?

OLIVER. What—th' automobeel?

NATE. No!—dum y'r jokin'—this second-hand business.

OLIVER. Reckon y' c'n trust me, Nate.

NATE. I know I c'n, Oliver. Tell y' what I'll do. I'll jest take y' out in th' machine f'r a spell t'morrer. Jest set th' time.

OLIVER (*sobers*). Wal', th' truth on't is, Nate, I sh'll be comf'r't'bly busy f'r a day 'r two, an'—

NATE (*interrupts*). Wal', I'll be ready any time *you* be.

OLIVER (*dryly*). Thank y'!

## ENTER NAOMI OWEN, L. D.

NAOMI (*sees* NATE). W'y, Nathan Haskins! Good afternoon! (GOES c.)

NATE (*rises*). A'ternoon, Mis' Owen!

NAOMI. We have n't seen you lately.

NATE. No, I ain't been 'round much, thet's a fact. I've been consider'bly busy with town affairs an' one thing an' another; but this a'ternoon I was a-goin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in.

NAOMI. And we are very glad to see you.

OLIVER. I reckon y'll be s'prised t' hear what Nate's been up t', mother.

NAOMI (*to NATE*). W'y, you ain't a-goin' to be married?

NATE. Oh, no, Mis' Owen—thet is, not at present anyway. Oliver was alludin' t' th' automobeel.

NAOMI. Automobeel! W'y, Nathan Haskins, you ain't a-thinkin' of buyin' one of them hossless kerriges?

OLIVER. He's done thinkin' 'bout it, mother. He's bought one already!

NATE (*proudly*). Reekon I'll make th' natives set up an' take notice—I mean—

OLIVER (*interrupts*). Jest t' other way 'round, Nate. Yes, I reckon y' will (*Aside*) an' side step some, too.

NAOMI. But Nathan, you'll be real careful? There are a great many accidents these days.

NATE. Oh, don't y' worry, Mis' Owen. I'll be careful all right. P'r'aps you'd like t' take a ride with me an' Oliver one of these days?

NAOMI. Oh! I wouldn't dare—

OLIVER (*interrupts*). An' es I said before, I sh'll be pretty busy—(*Knock heard at c. d.*) Hello! Wonder who thet is? Come in! (NAOMI GOES UP and opens door. OLIVER rises.)

## ENTER JERUSHA WILLIS, C. D.

NAOMI. W'y, it's Jerushy!

JERUSHA (*excitedly, not seeing NATE*). How d' do, Naomy; a'ternoon, Uncle Oliver! Hev you heard th'

latest? Of all th' crazy idees, this is th' wust. Nathan Haskins—

NATE (*rises quietly, interrupts*). A'ternoon, Miss Willis!

JERUSHA (*embarrassed*). W'y, Nathan Haskins—be you here? I—I tho't (*Recovers*) you was out *automobilin'*.

NATE. Th' machine ain't ready yet. (*With sarcasm*) When it is I'll let y' know so y' can spread th' news 'round th' village. Reckon I won't hev time.

JERUSHA (*indignantly*). News is it? I'll show you— (*Rushes at NATE who retreats DOWN L.* OLIVER and NAOMI *intercept her*)

OLIVER. Now y' mustn't. Nate was jest achaffin' y'.

NAOMI. Yes, Jerushy. He didn't mean any harm.

JERUSHA (*calms*). P'raps not! I consider whom it come from, anyway. (*Changes*) Naomy, I come over t' see if I could borry y're sponge cake receipe.

NAOMI (*CROSSES to R.*). W'y, certainly you can, Jerushy. Just step into the kitchen and I'll get it for you. (*To OLIVER and NATE*) You will excuse us? (*OLIVER nods*)

NATE (*with elaborate bow*). Certainly!

[*EXIT NAOMI, R. D.*

JERUSHA (*at R. D.*). An' before I leave, jest let me say f'r y'r special benefit, Mr. Nathan Haskins, if I do tell some news onc't in a while, I don't get *second-handed* stuff, same as some folks do! (*EXIT quickly, R. D.* NATE *winces and makes wry face*)

OLIVER (*laughs*). I reckon she hed y' thet time, Nate.

NATE. She al'ays was too dum sarcastic. Where in creation d' y' s'pose she found out 'bout thet second-hand business?

OLIVER. I give it up! (*Knock heard at c. d.*) Come in!

ENTER BILL WINTERGREEN, C. D.

BILL. A'ternoon, Oliver; howdy, Nate?

OLIVER. Hello, Bill.

NATE. Howdy!

OLIVER. Hev a cheer. (BILL sits r. of table; NATE sits L.; OLIVER stands just at rear of table)

NATE (to BILL). How's business?

BILL (meaningly). Nothin' much doin' now, but I calc'late ther' will be 'fore long.

OLIVER. Is that so?

NATE. Want t' know!

BILL (puts hat on table). Yes, it's so, an' I reckon some of these automobile fellers 'll know so 'fore long. I'm right after 'em, an' don't y' f'rget it!

OLIVER. I swan, Nate, y'll hev t' be sorter careful! (To BILL) S'pose y' know Nate's an automobeelist now?

NATE. I seen 'bout him in th' paper. Wal', he knows what th' speed law is, an' th' penalty of breakin' it.

NATE (ruffled). I calc'late, Bill, I can run *my* machine 'thout any pertic'lar advice fr'm any pertic'lar person in this pertic'lar town.

BILL. Wal', y'd better go slow.

NATE (warmly). I'll go 'bout's I dum please, f'r all 'f you 'r any other country constable! (Angrily) I'm chairman 'f th' board 'f selectmen 'f this town, an' won't brook interference fr'm any man. (Brings fist down on table)

OLIVER (warningly). Boys! Boys!

BILL (leans toward NATE). An' I'll hev *you* know that I'm constable 'f this town, elected by th' citizens, an' sworn t' do my duty! If *any* automobilist breaks th' speed law I'll nab him, sure's shootin'! (Brings fist down on table) As f'r any dum fool 'f a chairman 'f th' board 'f selectmen—

OLIVER (interrupts). I say, boys, ain't y' really gettin' a leetle excited?

NATE (not heeding; jumps up). If y' attempt t' stop me, I'll run over y'! (Shakes fist under BILL's nose)

BILL. (shakes fist under NATE's nose; they work DOWN stage). An' if y' do, I'll plug y'r tires 'til they'll look like por'us plasters, an' run y' in! Dum y'! (They are about to come to blows)

OLIVER (COMES quickly between them). Pshaw, boys! Now y' mustn't; I won't hev it! (To NATE) I reckon Bill

was only jokin', (To BILL) an 'Nate, too. (To both) Weren't y' now? (Laughs; they cool) Y're both officers of th' town, but y' mustn't f'rget thet y're peaceable citizens as well!

NATE. Reckon y're right, Oliver. I guess I did get a *leetle* excited.

BILL. An' mebbe I was a trifle too pert.

OLIVER. Wal' now, thet's th' talk! There ain't no harm done. Jest shake han's an' call it a joke. (NATE and BILL smile sheepishly and shake hands) In th' future, however, p'raps both of y' hed better go slow! Now seein' y've got consid'able het up over y'r argument, p'raps a glass of cider'd cool y' off a bit. (GOES UP) Jest come down cellar an' I'll give y' some thet'll make y'r mouths water.

NATE. Come along, Bill.

BILL. I'm willin'. (They follow OLIVER up) Ther' ain't no hard feelin's?

NATE. Nary a one. Glad we've all hed sech a soci'ble visit.

OLIVER (*dryly*). Yes we hev hed quite an interestin' time.

BILL. This is th' fust time I've hed a chance t' call on Oliver f'r quite a spell. I've been so all fired busy—

NATE (*interrupts*). Same here; but this a'fternoon I was a-goin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in.

[All EXEUNT, c. d. *Pause.*]

ENTER JERUSHA and NAOMI, R. D.

JERUSHA (*scanning recipe*). I'm awfully obliged, Naomy. I'll try to do as much f'r you some day. (Folds recipe and carries it in her hand)

NAOMI. Now, don't mention it, Jerushy.

JERUSHA. Land sakes! Ain't it funny 'bout Nate a-gettin' an automobeel? He'd better get a decent suit o' clothes. 'Tween you an' me, Naomy, tho' y' needn't say it come fr'm me, I'll wager he's a-fixin' t' get married!

NAOMI (*mild surprise*). W'y Jerushy!

JERUSHA. Wal', y' wait an' see if I ain't right. He kinder courted *me* f'r a spell, but—lawsee! I wouldn't no more think of hevin' a man like Nate Haskins than—  
(ENTER MAY HOLCOMB, C. D. *She carries books and papers*) W'y, how d' do, May, jest got out fr'm school?

MAY. Good afternoon, Miss Willis, and auntie! Yes; school closed early today, and—

JERUSHA (*interrupts*). Y've been up t' th' cemet'ry t' visit y'r poor mama's grave, ain't y'? I kinder tho't y'd been a-cryin'. (MAY places handkerchief to her eyes)

NAOMI (*warningly*). Jerushy.

JERUSHA. Ther'! Ther'! I didn't mean t' hurt y'r feelin's.

MAY. I know you mean well, Miss Willis. Thank you! (GOES DOWN and puts books and papers on table)

JERUSHA (*changes*). S'pose y've both heard th' latest? (GOES C.; NAOMI is at L. of her, MAY at R. of table) Herbert West hes passed his bar examinations an' come home a reg'lar limb o' th' law.

MAY. Yes; I am so (*Catches herself*)—informed!

NAOMI. We're all proud of Herbert.

JERUSHA. Yes! Yes! I know. A mighty smart young man he is—an' rich too. His uncle, Hiram West, who died las' month, left him all his fortune. They do say Herbert is a-makin' eyes at Phoebe Rutherford—tho' y' needn't say it come fr'm me—an' I reckon she'll do her best t' ketch him! (MAY starts slightly and clutches chair R. of table) May, he an' you used t' be good friends.

MAY. We are now, I trust.

NAOMI. Yes; Herbert seems almost like—

JERUSHA (*interrupts*). One o' th' fam'ly! I dare say! I tho't p'raps he might be some day, but wal', I must be gettin' on. Good-bye, May; a'fternoon, Naomy!

[EXIT C. D.

MAY and NAOMI. Good-bye. (NAOMI at C. D.; MAY at rear of table)

NAOMI (COMES DOWN). My! What an afternoon for callers. Nate Haskins came first. Then Jerushy ran over to borrow my sponge cake recipe, and, with the two of 'em, we had quite a visit.

## ENTER OLIVER, C. D.

OLIVER. I've jest escaped fr'm Jerushy. How thet woman c'n talk. Bill Wintergreen called too—but y' didn't see him, mother.

NAOMI. William called?

OLIVER. Yes. I swan, if he an' Nate didn't get t' argufyin' over th' automobeel speed law. I reckoned at one time they'd come t' blows!

NAOMI. Mercy! What can Nate be a-thinkin' of?

MAY (smiles). I met him this afternoon. He said he was bound to be popular and up-to-date. He invited me to take a "spin" in the auto tomorrow.

OLIVER (laughs). An' of course y' accepted th' invitation?

MAY. Why, Uncle Oliver. You know I am rather timid, and—I felt somewhat guilty—I informed him that I was quite busy with my school work—and—and I told him the truth.

OLIVER. Of course y' did! So did Naomy an' I. (All laugh)

NAOMI. Now, pa! (Changes) But I must get about bakin' my biscuits for supper. (CROSSES to R.)

MAY. And I will help you.

NAOMI. No dearie; you've worked hard enough in school today. You just set down and rest.

MAY. But surely I ought to help. You both have been so kind to me since poor mama—(Breaks down; sinks into chair R. of table and buries face in handkerchief)

NAOMI (GOES to her). Ther'! Ther'! It's all right, dearie!

MAY. How can I ever repay you and Uncle Oliver for your kindness?

OLIVER. Leetle gal, we're only too glad t' do what we c'n fr' y—es God gives us th' right.

NAOMI. Yes! yes! (To MAY) You mustn't worry about anythin'.

MAY. God bless you both! (NAOMI caresses her and GOES R. OLIVER is UP L.)

NAOMI (brightly). Well! I must see about them biscuits.

OLIVER. An' I guess I'll go out on th' porch an' hev a smoke, so's not t' disturb th' leetle gal in her examination work. (*Takes pipe and tobacco pouch from bureau and fills pipe*) If y' need me, Naomy, jest speak.

NAOMI. Yes, father!

[EXIT R. D.

MAY. You will not disturb me, Uncle Oliver. I have only a few papers to correct this afternoon.

OLIVER. Thank y', leetle gal, but I'm afeared if I stay here I'll get t' talkin' 'bout Nate's automobeel an' other public improv'ments; so I reckon I'd better go out on th' porch an' smoke an' think it all over.

[EXIT OLIVER c. d. *lighting pipe*.

MAY. (*smiles*). I can't examine these papers just now. (*Puts them in book and shuts it*) I must attend to that letter. Why should I hesitate when I have done my duty? Poor mother. (*Wipes eyes with handkerchief*) For her needs I would have sacrificed my happiness, but now I'll linger no longer. That letter shall be sent at once. (*GOES to bureau, gets envelopes and paper, pen, ink bottle, etc. Sits L. of table and writes, speaking, as she addresses an envelope*) "Hermon Hilton, Esq., Town." What a kind old gentleman he is. I wonder what Herbert would think should he ever learn the truth. He shall not know—yet. There. The deed is done. Now for a stamp. (*GOES to bureau, opens drawer as if in search of stamps*) None here. (*Looks among papers on bureau. As she does so, an envelope falls to the floor unnoticed by her*) I must have left them in my room.

[EXIT L. D.

OLIVER (*pause, OFF stage*). W'y, hello, Herbert! Glad t' see y'! Glad t' see y'! Y're lookin' well.

HERBERT (*OFF stage*). Thank you, Mr. Owen. How are all the folks?

OLIVER (*OFF stage*). Well, considerin'. Jest step in. Y'll find May an' Naomy, an' they'll be powerful glad t' see y'. I'll be 'long in a minit 'r so.

HERBERT (*at c. d.*). Thank you.

ENTER HERBERT WEST, C. D. *He carries a small book*

HERBERT (*removes hat, looks about*). No one about?

Well, I'll wait. (GOES to table and lays hat and book down; sees school books) Poor little schoolma'am. Alone in the world, and without friends except Uncle Oliver and Aunt Naomi and—me. Yes. Thank Heaven success seems mine, at last, and I can ask her that all important question. Once my little wife, she shall bid farewell to this task of school teaching. (GOES up, sees envelope on floor near bureau, and picks it up) Aha! Something she has forgotten! (Opens envelope, GOES c. As he reads, the expression on his face changes from a smile to surprise, incredulity, despair) What's this? (Reads aloud) "Hermon Hilton, Esq.

Dear Mr. Hilton,—

After long and prayerful consideration of your generous offer, I have decided that if you care to accept a woman who will do all in her power to make your home a happy one, but who possibly never can love you, I will be your wife. Sincerely yours,

May Holcomb."

Squire Hilton, the miser! (Crushes paper and lets it fall to floor; GOES to table, sees envelope, picks it up and reads address) My God! She has accepted him! I thought she cared for me! (Drops envelope on table; sits r. of table, hand to head) I see it all now. It's the same old story—money! Money! And she, the woman I esteemed above the lure of gold, will sell herself—No! (Rises) Heaven forgive me for that thought! It was for her mother's sake that she did this—but the mother is dead—and May should have known. God help me! (More calmly) She must never know that I have discovered this. I will go before she finds me here, and try as a man to overcome this awful blow. (Pauses as if in doubt what to do, then takes hat and GOES up stage. Meets MAY who ENTERS l. d.)

MAY. Herbert, I am glad to see you back. (Extends right hand. He takes it for a second, then drops it)

HERBERT. I am glad to be back home again, that is—I was—

MAY. Will you not be seated? I will call Uncle Oliver and Aunt Naomi.

HERBERT. No, thank you! Please do not disturb

Mrs. Owen. Uncle Oliver is on the porch. He bade me come in. I came up this afternoon to—return your book. (*Indicates book on table*)

MAY. I trust you enjoyed reading it.

HERBERT. Very much, thank you. I must go now.

MAY. You are very busy. I fear you are working too steadily. You are pale.

HERBERT (*bitterly*) I *have* been working hard for—nothing. A great sorrow has come to me—

MAY (*interrupts*). Even as to me. (GOES to him at c.) Herbert, you have my heart-felt sympathy. I know what sorrow is, and I can pity you!

HERBERT (*aside*). My God! Can she be so false? (*Aloud*) May—I—I thank you! I can but offer you my sincere sympathy in your bereavement, and—and say good-bye. (GOES up)

MAY. You will call again—when you are more at leisure? We all shall be glad to see you.

HERBERT (*striving to be calm*). Thank you! Don't mind about me. I hope you may be happy. Good-bye.

[EXIT hurriedly, c. d.]

MAY. Good-bye. Why, how strange he acts! (GOES to front of table, stands perplexed) He has met with some great sorrow. Yes—his uncle is dead. (*Thinks*) I begin to understand. What Jerusha hinted at is true. No!—Yes! Oh, it is true! Herbert has been made his uncle's sole heir on condition that he marries Phœbe Ruthford, and, to secure the fortune, he will make her his wife! (*Passionately*) And I thought he cared for me! Oh! Herbert, what sacrifices you and I have been asked to make. (*Sinks into chair L. of table and sobs*)

ENTER OLIVER, c. d.

OLIVER. Wal', th' squire left ruther sudden didn't he? (GOES to bureau and puts away pipe)

MAY (*struggling for self-control*). He—he is very busy—and—

OLIVER (r. c.). Leetle gal, what ails y'? Y're es pale es death.

MAY (*rises*; GOES l. c.). It is nothing, uncle—a slight

headache. I will go to my room. (*Takes up envelope, stamps it with one-cent stamp and CROSSES to OLIVER*) Will you kindly mail this letter when you go down to the post office tonight—surely?

OLIVER (*takes letter*). W'y, eert'ly. (*Puts letter into vest pocket*)

MAY. Thank you. I will go now, if you will excuse me.

OLIVER. Course I will! Y' jest let y'r lessons go f'r a spell an' rest y'self.

MAY (*GOES UP; striving to control herself*). Yes, uncle—

[*EXIT L. D.*]

OLIVER (*looks after her*). Wal', what does this mean? (*At r. of table*) Th' young squire rushes off—th' leetle gal's in tears—I vum. They must hev quarreled. (*Sees paper on floor*) Hello! What's this? (*Spreads it out and reads to himself*) Lord Almighty! They hev quarreled, an' she hes accepted th' old squire t' spite Herbert. (*Crushes paper in left hand; takes letter from vest pocket with right hand; compares the two*) This must be th' letter of acceptance—th' other, a copy. She's goin' t' marry that old shrimp of a miser is she? Not if her Uncle Oliver c'n prevent it. Now, what'll I do? I can't speak t' her 'bout this—jest yet. (*Stands perplexed, scratching head with left hand; holds envelope in right hand so that audience can see the one cent stamp; turns it up and scans address—struck by thought—smiles and nods head*) She hes asked me t' post this letter—(*Determinedly*)—an' I will!

CURTAIN

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Same as ACT I. Next evening. Stage lights low.*

*Rear border lights out. Lamp turned low on table. Clock indicates the hour of 8, and strikes, as curtain rises. No music. OLIVER DISCOVERED at c. d. smoking and looking off.*

OLIVER (*knocks ashes out of pipe, glances at clock*). I swanny, it's 'bout time that young feller was here—if he's

comin'. (GOES to bureau, lays pipe down; GOES slowly to table and turns up light. Stage lights up) I don't know but what I've got myself mixed up in a pretty delicate matter—but, Good Lord! I jest can't bear t' see them two young people parted through a miser'ble misunderstandin'—an' th' leetle gal a-saerificin' herself t' th' old squire. No, sree! So I must do my duty jest th' best I know how. But if Herbert shouldn't come— (Knock heard at c. d.) Thet must be him! Come in! (GOES UP. ENTER HERBERT, c. d.) Good evenin', Herbert! (They shake hands and COME DOWN)

HERBERT. Good evening, Mr. Owen.

OLIVER. I'd begun t' think y' wa'nt comin'. Hev a cheer. (Indicates chair L. of table) Let me take y'r hat. (Takes HERBERT'S hat and places it on table)

HERBERT. Thank you! I am a trifle late—an important engagement detained me. I received your note this afternoon. (Sits L. of table)

OLIVER (at chair R. of table). I see. (Thinks. Aside) Now how in time 'll I begin? (Sits, clears throat. Aloud) Wal', I hev a leetle matter t' talk over with y'. I was up t' y'r office this a'ternoon, but y' were out. I tho't p'r'aps it wouldn't be askin' too much t' hev y' step down here f'r a few minits tonight, so I left th' note.

HERBERT. It has caused me little inconvenience, I assure you. The matter you refer to is of a private nature, I perceive.

OLIVER. Er—yes! Quite personal. (Pauses)

HERBERT (aside). I wish he'd proceed.

OLIVER (aside). Now how in time 'll I begin? (Pauses)

HERBERT. I am at your service, Mr. Owen! (Sound of automobile horn and effect of automobile approaching and stopping, OFF stage)

OLIVER. Er—yes. Wal', it's jest like this— (Knock heard at c. d.) I reckon thet must be Nate Haskins. Come in! (Rises)

ENTER NATE, C. D.

NATE. Evenin', Oliver; howdy, squire? (Removes cap)

OLIVER. Hello, Nate.

HERBERT. Good evening, Mr. Haskins.

NATE. I was a-goin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in.

OLIVER. Glad y' did. Hev a cheer.

NATE. No, thank y'; can't stop. I'm a-tryin' out th' automobeel t'night. P'r'aps y'd like t' take a ride?

OLIVER. I'm much obliged, Nate; but th' truth on't is I've got a leetle business t' transact this evenin'. (Aside) An' it's a dum sight worse 'n automobeelin', too!

NATE. I see. Wal' possibly th' squire, here, might like t' try th' machine? (Turns to HERBERT)

HERBERT. I thank you, Mr. Haskins, but the business to which Mr. Owen refers concerns us both, so, under the circumstances—

NATE (interrupts). Thet's all right, squire! (To OLIVER) How 'bout Miss May 'r Miss Owen?

OLIVER. Wal', May's invited out f'r th' evenin', an' Naomy's entertainin' some of th' church ladies in th' parlor. I'm sorry, Nate, but we all are powerful occupied.

NATE (aside). What a dum busy place this town is all of a sudden. (Aloud) Wal', thet's all right, too. I'll take y' all out—when y're more at liberty.

HERBERT. I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Haskins.

OLIVER. Yes; it's real kind of y', Nate.

NATE. Don't mention it! Wal', guess I'll be putterin' 'long. (Knock heard c. d.) I reckon y've got more comp'ny, Oliver. (Opens door)

ENTER BILL, c. d. *Butt of horse-pistol and handcuffs protrude from his rear pocket.*

BILL. Evenin' ever'body! (HERBERT nods)

NATE. W'y hello, Bill!

OLIVER (aside). I swan! Ther'll be more trouble now. (Aloud) Fine evenin', Bill!

BILL. Yes!

NATE. Wal', I hate t' tear myself away, but my automobeel's a-waitin'. I say, Bill, don't y' want t' go out f'r a spell? Folks here are all busy.

BILL (at l. c., with contempt). Out f'r a spill y' mean! No, thank y', I'm busy too.

NATE (at r. c.). Wal' now, y' needn't be so all fired tempesterous 'bout it! I s'pose y' foller'd me here t' give some more advice!

BILL (advances). Thet's *jest* what I come in here f'r, an' in th' presence of these witnesses (*Indicates OLIVER and HERBERT*) I repeat what I said yesterd'y—go slow.

NATE—(advances) An', es *I said* yesterd'y, I'll go 'bout's I dum feel like it; an' *you* n'r any other country constable don't want t' interfere—

OLIVER (*who has gradually GONE UP, comes between them*). Come, come, boys; y' musn't argufy. Remember y'r failin's. (*HERBERT rises*)

NATE. Jest as *you* say, Oliver!

BILL. I don't mean no harm, Oliver; an' I think th' squire, here, 'll understand. I'm only explainin' th' law. (*To NATE*) An' I repeat f'r y'r special benefit, Mr. Haskins—go slow! If y' don't observe th' law, I'll run y' in. Night all. [EXIT quickly, c. d.

NATE (GOES quickly to c. d.). We'll see—

OLIVER (*interrupts*). I wouldn't get reckless, Nate.

NATE. No siree, I won't—but I'll show *him* a thing 'r two. I beg th' pardon of both you an' th' squire, if I've been hasty. I didn't mean t' stop long, anyhow. I was a-goin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in. [EXIT, c. d.

OLIVER (*looks OFF; automobile effect dies away. Shuts door and COMES DOWN smiling. HERBERT sits*) Wal', I reckoned we'd hev quite a storm—but it passed over with a leetle thunder an' lightnin'. (*Sits*) I say, squire, y'll hev a case b'tween 'em one of these days, if they keep at it.

HERBERT. I trust not.

OLIVER. Squire, I vum it seems strange t' call y' thet. Seems like jest a few days ago y' were runnin' 'round th' village, a leetle, bare-footed, freckled-faced shaver, knee-high t' a grasshopper; an' now y're a reg'lar lim' o' th' law, with a bright an' prosp'r'us future before y'. My boy, y' must be a happy mortal!

HERBERT (*disconsolately*). Happy mortal! I'm a miserable man.

OLIVER (*dryly*). Y're a dum fool.

HERBERT (*surprised*). Sir!

OLIVER (*smiles*). Yes! Ain't y' now?

HERBERT (*rises*). Mr. Owen, you will pardon me if I say that I am in no mood for joking this evening. Neither did I come here to be insulted.

OLIVER (*rises*). Pshaw now! Y' mustn't get techy. I didn't mean anythin' wrong—I jest natur'ly let my tho'ts come out quick like—but, really, ain't y' actin' a *leetle* bit foolish?

HERBERT. Pardon me, Mr. Owen, possibly I was too hasty. I—I—Let's take up the business you spoke of (*Sits*)

OLIVER. Thet's jest what I'm alludin' to.

HERBERT (*perplexed*). I fail to see—

OLIVER (*interrupts*). Herbert, I trust y'll excuse me f'r interferin' in y'r affairs, but what I'm a-goin' t' say concerns both you an' May.

HERBERT (*aside*). He knows! (*Aloud*) To what do you refer?

OLIVER. Wal', t' be plain, I'm alludin' t' May an' you an' th' quarrel.

HERBERT (*surprised*). Quarrel? We have had no quarrel!

OLIVER. Wal', misunderstandin' then.

HERBERT. Neither have we had a misunderstanding. Mr. Owen, please explain.

OLIVER. I will! (*Sits; leans toward HERBERT*) Naomy an' I hev known May since she were jest a leetle gal, an' we've watched her bloom int' womanhood. Since jest before her mother died, a few weeks ago, she hes made her home with us. She's no kin t' us, but we've come t' love her es our own child. This is her home now, an' we are her protectors—es God gives us th' right. Now it's no use f'r y' t' deny it, you an' th' leetle gal hed some trouble yester'dy. Y' went away white an' tremblin', an' she—Wal', excuse me, boy, but I must ask y' what it meant!

HERBERT. Mr. Owen—Uncle Oliver—I appreciate your kindness for Miss Holecomb. I *will* explain my hasty leave-taking yesterday. When I came back home, after many months of hard work and study, my first thought was for the girl I had known and loved since we were

schoolmates. Yesterday I came to ask her hand in marriage.

OLIVER. She didn't refuse y'?

HERBERT. She has accepted another—Squire Hilton!

OLIVER. Lord Almighty! How do *you* know? Did she say so?

HERBERT. No! But the letter—

OLIVER (*interrupts*). What letter?

HERBERT. Listen. When I came into this room yesterday, I found no one about. (ENTER MAY, *unobserved*, c. d. *Listens*) While waiting, I discovered a piece of paper lying on the floor. Supposing it to be a school paper Miss Holeomb had dropped, I picked it up and glanced at it—why, I know not. Imagine my surprise when I found it to be a letter to Mr. Hermon Hilton, accepting an offer of marriage from him and signed—"May Holcomb!" On this table lay a sealed envelope, addressed to him. At first, I hardly could believe the truth. Then—well, I got away as quickly as possible.

OLIVER. Y' must be erazy! I found thet letter on th' floor, *after* y' left. I tho't you two hed quarreled, an' she hed accepted th' old squire t' spite y'. Thet envelope she give me, later—

HERBERT (*quickly*). What did you do with *that* letter?

OLIVER. W'y, I posted it! I'll tell y' somethin' more—

HERBERT (*rises, interrupts*). Do not trouble yourself further, Mr. Owen. (*Sadly*) She has accepted the squire—and that ends the matter.

OLIVER (*aside*). Yes, it must be true. Who'd atho't it of th' leetle gal? (*Aloud*) An' I hev made all this fuss an' flurry—f'r nothin'.

HERBERT. Do not blame yourself, Mr. Owen. I sincerely appreciate your kindness and good intentions. This matter shall be strictly confidential—and now, good-night. (*Extends right hand*. OLIVER *rises and grasps it for a second, then drops it, and stands at r. c. in deep perplexity*. HERBERT *takes hat from table and GOES UP. Meets MAY who GOES about c.*)

MAY. One moment.

HERBERT (*at l. c.*). May—Miss Holeomb!

OLIVER (*turns toward her*). Leetle gal. You here?

MAY. Yes. I came in time to hear your conversation concerning my letter. Forgive me for listening. Oh, Uncle Oliver—Herbert, it has been the cause of a terrible mistake!

OLIVER and HERBERT. Mistake?

MAY. Yes. I will explain. Two months ago, when mother was seized with her last illness, and she and I came to make our home here, Squire Hilton one day made me an offer of marriage. I rejected it, explaining that I could not marry a man I did not love. Then, he spoke of mother's illness—of her chances of recovery if she could be taken to a different clime—of how I, as his wife, with money at my command, could provide for her and prolong her life. He urged me to reconsider the matter, and refused to accept my answer as a final one. I did consider, long and earnestly and prayerfully, and at last—for mother's sake—I accepted his offer, and one night wrote him a letter to that effect. The same night, before I had an opportunity to address the envelope and mail the letter, mother suddenly was stricken and died. In the days of sorrow that followed, I quite forgot the squire's letter, hidden away among some of my papers. A few days ago I remembered, but a search for the letter proved fruitless, and I even questioned in my mind whether I really had written it, or only imagined or dreamed that I had done so. Then, I wrote the second letter, and last night it was mailed. From your conversation I infer that Herbert found the first letter after it had dropped from among my papers, where I had mislaid it.

HERBERT. I did find it, and was desperate. That is why I acted so like a fool yesterday!

OLIVER. An' then I found it, where Herbert hed dropped it—an' I reckon I've made a dum fool of myself!

MAY. And I—I—Well, in my agitation, I placed a one-cent stamp on the envelope—and Uncle Oliver mailed it that way. I found it in the post office window tonight marked "Held For Postage."

OLIVER. I confess! I *did* post it thet way—f'r your sakes, young people!

MAY. You did it purposely?

HERBERT. Purposely?

OLIVER. Yes! Es I said before, I believed you two hed quarreled, an' May hed accepted th' old squire f'r spite. When I saw that one-cent stamp on th' envelope, a plan popped int' my head like a flash. I knew th' old squire was out of town this week; th' letter would be held f'r postage, an' that would give me time t' work out a leetle scheme of my own. So I posted th' letter, saw Herbert, an' hev tried my best t' bring 'bout a reconciliation, as th' novelists say—but, now, everythin's all tangled up. (*Beseechingly, to MAY*) Oh, leetle gal. Y' can't; y' mustn't marry that old miser! I won't hev it so.

MAY. Marry him! Oh, uncle; don't you understand? Squire Hilton returned today. I saw him this evening; he pressed me for his answer—and I gave it!

OLIVER. Y' give him y'r answer pers'n'ly?

MAY. Yes! The same answer this letter contains! (*Produces letter she has held in right hand, tears open envelope, spreads out letter and offers it to OLIVER*) Read it, uncle.

OLIVER (*shrinks back and COMES DOWN R.*). I'd ruther not!

MAY (*offers it to HERBERT*). Read it, Herbert!

HERBERT. Never! (*GOES DOWN L.*)

MAY. Then I will! (*GOES to R. of table; reads letter aloud*)

"Hermon Hilton, Esq.,

Town.

Dear Mr. Hilton,—

After long and prayerful consideration of your generous offer, I have decided that I cannot become your wife.

Sincerely yours,  
MAY HOLCOMB."

(*Lets envelope and letter fall to table*)

OLIVER (*overcome*). What a dum fool I hev made of myself.

HERBERT ( *fervently*). Thank God!

OLIVER. F'r two dum fools, eh? I know what y' mean, boy, an' I'll say "Amen!"

MAY. Oh, Uncle Oliver! You thought when you posted this letter that you were holding up the other answer so that you could bring about a reconciliation—you did this for me—Herbert—us?

OLIVER (*jubilant*). “Us” is c’rect, leetle gal! (*Changes; to both*) Y’ mustn’t let Naomy know of this. I never could stand her chaffin’.

HERBERT. I assure you we will be silent regarding this matter.

MAY. Yes! Yes! God bless you, Uncle Oliver.

OLIVER. Leetle gal, I hope He’ll bless us all! (*GOES to table and stands rear of same. Takes up envelope and letter and holds them over lamp chimney until they blaze*) An’ f’r ever’body’s peace of mind I reckon I’d better serve this letter same es I did t’ other one. (*All smile. He crushes the burned paper in his hands, GOES to c. d., opens it and scatters ashes outside. Glances back at MAY and HERBERT, then looks OFF*)

HERBERT (*GOES quickly to MAY*). May, can you ever forgive me?

MAY. Yes, Herbert! And you will forgive—

HERBERT (*interrupts*). I have nothing to forgive. I understand all now. (*Closer*) May, you heard me tell Uncle Oliver why I came here yesterday. I come to you now, with the same question I would have asked you then. (*Passionately*) I love you. I always have loved you, and now—

MAY (*interrupts; motions him back*). Stop, what about Phœbe Ruthford?

HERBERT. So you have heard that rumor too? I can imagine from whom it came. (*Emphatic tone*) But it is absolutely false.

MAY. I—I do not wish to tell tales out of school, but yesterday Miss Willis hinted that you—that you cared for Phœbe. That was the reason I acted so foolishly. I thought, from your coolness, that you were going to marry her; that to comply with the terms of your uncle’s will, you—(*Breaks down*) Oh! What am I saying?

HERBERT. I understand, dear. You listened to Jerusha’s rambling talk and supposed that my late uncle,

who willed me a few dollars, stipulated whom I should marry. I would never marry any girl but you.

MAY. Oh, Herbert, forgive me.

HERBERT. Little woman, *you* are the one I love. I think we understand each other now. May, will you be my wife?

MAY (*pauses a second*). Yes—Herbert.

HERBERT (*embraces her*). My darling.

OLIVER (*turns*). Ahem! (*They separate*) Guess I'd better go out on th' porch an' hev a smoke!

HERBERT. Stay, Uncle Oliver. You are this little woman's rightful protector, as you have stated this evening; you have brought about this reconciliation and assured our happiness. May has promised to become my wife, and I ask your consent to our marriage.

ENTER NAOMI, L. D. OLIVER GOES DOWN.

NAOMI. Marriage? W'y, May—Herbert—Oliver! I don't understand.

OLIVER. Mother, Herbert hes asked f'r our leetle gal in marriage. She hes accepted him an' I reckon we hed better give 'em our blessin'.

NAOMI. Yes, father! (*To MAY and HERBERT*) Oh, I'm so glad. (*GOES to them, kisses MAY and shakes HERBERT's hand*. OLIVER GOES to them and joins their hands; reverently) An' may th' Lord Almighty bless y' both!

ENTER JERUSHA quickly, c. d.

JERUSHA (*breathlessly*). Excuse my comin' right in, but *hev* you heard th' latest?

OLIVER. What now, Jerushy?

JERUSHA (*about c.*). W'y, Bill Wintergreen's a-settin' out on th' porch with a pistol in his hand. He says he's a-goin' t' arrest Nate Haskins, when he comes up th' road, 'cause he's broke th' automobile speed law!

NAOMI. Merey!

OLIVER. Wal', that is quite a news item, Jerushy, but I reckon we've got y' beat this time. (*To NAOMI*) Shall I tell her, mother? (*NAOMI nods*)

JERUSHA. What's th' news? What makes y' all so mysterious like? Can't y' see I'm jest a-dyin' t' know?

OLIVER. Don't die, Jerushy. Y'll want t' live an' come t' th' weddin'!

JERUSHA. Weddin'! Whose weddin'?

OLIVER. Naomy an' I take pleasure in announcin' th' engagement of Miss May Holcomb t' Squire West; an' congratulations are now in order.

JERUSHA (*overcome*). What? W'y, I tho't—Wal', f'r th' land's sake! (*Automobile effect off stage*)

BILL (*is heard off stage*). Stop! Stop in th' name o' the law! (*Automobile effect is heard louder*)

NATE (*heard in the distance, off stage*). I can't stop! Whoa! Whoa! Stop me! Somebody stop me! The dum machine's arunnin' away with me!

ENTER BILL c. d., stands and points pistol off.

BILL (*to NATE, outside*). Stop; 'r I'll fire!

OLIVER (*quickly*). Hold on, Bill!

JERUSHA. Merey! Ther'll be murder! (*There is a violent crash off stage, followed by an explosion. NATE comes tumbling in at c. d., collides with BILL and they roll down stage. Red-fire, off, until curtain. Women scream, etc. The action to curtain must be brisk.*)

BILL (DOWN R. C., jumps up, rushes to NATE DOWN C.; levels pistol at him and produces handcuffs). Get up 'fore I place y' under arrest!

OLIVER (*GOES quickly to NATE and helps him rise. To BILL waving him back*). Hold on, Bill! Let's see if he's hurt! (*To NATE*) I swan, Nate, what's happened?

NATE (*half dazed, brushes hand across forehead*). Wal', y' see I was agoin' by an' tho't I'd jest drop in—(*Lively music*)

#### TABLEAU

BILL DOWN R. C. OLIVER, NATE, c. NAOMI at R. of table.

HERBERT and MAY in front of table DOWN L. C. JERUSHA at c. d. looking OFF.

QUICK CURTAIN

# NEW PLAYS

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## TOM'S ARRIVAL

*Play in One Act. Three Females*

One plain interior scene. Three maiden ladies learning by wire that Tom is to arrive, make different arrangements for his comfort. The surprising arrival of Tom creates consternation in the little household and the audience is kept out of the secret until the last moment. Plays about twenty-five minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

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## PLACE AUX DAMES; or, THE LADIES SPEAK AT LAST

*Play in One Act. Four Females*

One plain interior scene. Four of Shakespeare's heroines, Portia, Juliet, Ophelia and Lady Macbeth, find themselves at a watercure, where they discuss their husbands. A clever burlesque, long a favorite, and now published for the first time at a popular price. Plays about forty-five minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

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## THE PEREGRINATIONS OF POLLY

*Play in One Act. Three Females*

BY HELEN P. KANE

One plain interior scene. Polly and Margaret, bachelor maids, being invited to attend a musical, determine to exchange escorts. The result may not have been as was intended, but certainly was one to have been expected. The dialogue throughout is brilliant and snappy, the action quick, thus ensuring a success for this bright sketch. Plays about forty-five minutes.

PRICE 15 CENTS

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## RAPS

*Vaudeville Sketch in One Act. Two Males*

BY ELEANOR MAUD CRANE

One interior scene. An exceedingly bright dialogue between an Irish carpenter and a slightly intoxicated gilded youth. Full of "patter" and "get backs." Plays about thirty minutes.

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## FRESH FUN

*Humorous Monologue. One Male*

Introducing bright and clever patter that is sure to please the audience.

PRICE 25 CENTS

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## THE WARDROBE OF THE KING

*Burlesque in One Act. Eight Males*

BY WILLIAM J. MCKIERNAN

One exterior scene. Costumes grotesque and fantastic. An amusing burlesque for boys, easily produced, full of bright situations, and sure to make a hit. The play may be staged very simply, or made as elaborate as the producer sees fit. Besides the eight speaking parts, the company of officers, suite of the King and Queen, etc., may utilize any number of persons. Plays one hour. By the introduction of specialties the time may be considerably lengthened.

PRICE 15 CENTS

# NEW PLAYS

**LEGAL PUZZLE, A.** **25 cents.** A farce comedy in 3 acts by W. A. TREMAYNE. 7 male, 5 female (or by doubling, 6 male, 3 female) characters. 3 interior scenes. Time,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Costumes modern. This play can be highly recommended, the scenes are easy, the dialogue brisk and snappy, and the action rapid. The parts are all good, being evenly divided, the principals appearing in each act.

**SIMPKINS' LITTLE BREAKFAST PARTY.** **25 cents.** A farce in 1 act, by CHARLES S. BIRD. 4 male, 3 female characters. Costumes modern. 1 plain interior scene. Time,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. *Simpkins*, having inherited a fortune, is spending a winter in New York, leaving a sweetheart in his small home city. He becomes enamored of an actress and invites her to a little breakfast in his apartments. She accepts, with the understanding that she be accompanied by her father, a widower, who proves to be an old flame of the widowed mother of *Simpkins'* fiancee. For reasons which soon become obvious, the major sends her a hint of *Simpkins'* gay life, and suggests her presence in the city to investigate. She decides accordingly, and the inopportune arrival of herself and daughter cause complications of the most ludicrous and comical variety.

**SHERIFF OF TUCKAHOE, The.** **25 cents.** A Western sketch in 1 act, by GEORGE M. ROSENER. 3 male, 1 female character. 1 simple interior scene. Time, about 1 hour. An intensely dramatic sketch of the tracing of a band of road-agents, one of whom is eventually captured by his half-brother, the sheriff, in the house of the mother. The mother's pleadings, unknown to her, induce the sheriff to release the suspect, he taking his half-brother's place as the criminal. The circumstantial evidence fails to be convincing, and consequently the sheriff's self sacrifice is not needed. All strong parts. Easily staged. Highly recommended.

**BISCUITS AND BILLS.** **25 cents.** A comedy in 1 act, by O. B. DU BOIS. 3 male, 1 female character. Modern costumes. 1 easy interior scene. Time, about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours. From start to finish there is not a dull moment in this little comedy; it is brimful of fun, of rapid action and of sparkling dialogue, and when played with the "dash" it requires, is sure to be a success.

**FRESH FUN.** **25 cents.** A humorous monologue for a male character. Introducing bright and clever patter that is sure to please an audience.

**FUTURE LADY HOLLAND, The.** **25 cents.** A comedy for girls in 3 acts, by HELEN P. KANE. 1 interior scene. 4 female characters. Time,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours. The dowager *Lady Holland* has arranged that her niece, *Diana*, should marry *Lester*, the present *Lord Holland*, son of the Dowager. To that end she directs another niece, *Yvonne*, to devote herself to *Stacy Brent*, thus throwing *Diana* and *Lester* together. How successful her scheme proves is told in the climax. *Lady Holland* is stately, haughty and insular. *Diana*, the lead, patterned upon *Lady Gay Spanker*, is sporty and full of life. The other characters are well defined and good, and the dialogue is excellent.

**TOM'S ARRIVAL.** **15 cents.** A play for girls in 1 act, 3 female characters. 1 plain interior scene. Time, about 25 minutes. Three maiden ladies, learning by wire that *Tom* is to arrive, make different arrangements for his comfort. The surprising arrival of *Tom* creates consternation in the little household and the audience is kept out of the secret until the last moment.

**PLACE AUX DAMES; or, The Ladies Speak at Last.** **15 cents.** Shakespearian sketch in 1 act. 4 female characters. 1 plain interior scene. Time, about 45 minutes. Four of Shakespeare's heroines, *Portia*, *Juliet*, *Ophelia* and *Lady Macbeth*, find themselves at a watercure, where they discuss their husbands. A clever burlesque, long a favorite, and now published for the first time at a popular price.

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